AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of predicting whether an individual having hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection will respond to interferon alpha (IFNα) treatment;, the method comprising;:

determining the presence or absence of antibodies reactive with a preS1 peptide consisting of the sequence of residues 94-117 (SEQ ID NO:1) in a pre-treatment sample obtained from the individual, and; ,

predicting from the presence of said antibodies in said sample being indicative that said individual will respond to said treatment or predicting from the absence of said antibodies in said sample that said individual will not respond to said treatment.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 comprising detecting the presence of said antibodies in said sample and thereby determining predicting that the individual will respond to IFNα treatment

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 comprising detecting the absence of said antibodies in said sample and thereby determining predicting that the individual will not respond to IFNα treatment

4. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the individual has chronic HBV infection.

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5.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the individual is HBeAg positive.

6.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the individual is HBeAg negative.

7.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the antibodies are IgG or IgM antibodies.

8.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein the pre-treatment sample is a blood, serum or plasma sample.

9.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 comprising;

contacting the pre-treatment sample with a preS1 peptide consisting of the sequence of residues 94-117 (SEQ ID NO:1) and;

determining binding of said antibodies to said peptide.

10.   (Original) A method according to claim 9 wherein the peptide comprises a detectable label.

11.   (Original) A method according to claim 9 wherein said peptide is immobilised.

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12.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9 wherein said binding is detected with a labelled secondary antibody.

13.-19. (Cancelled).

20.   (Currently Amended) A method of treating a hepatitis B infection in an individual comprising;

~~Identifying the individual as responsive to interferon alpha (IFNα) treatment using a method according to claim 1~~

determining the presence or absence of antibodies reactive with a preS1 peptide consisting of the sequence of residues 94-117 (SEQ ID NO:1) in a pre-treatment sample obtained from the individual;

predicting from the presence of said antibodies in said sample that said individual will respond to interferon alpha (IFNα) treatment ~~claims 1-12~~, and;

administering IFNα to said individual.

21.   (Cancelled).

22.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 20 wherein corticosteroid is administered to the individual.

23.   (Cancelled).

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